

Working for solutions to the Asian carp issue, Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) stood with Governor Pat Quinn and other officials in Chicago on Tuesday to announce a new public-private partnership that will help stop the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes. The partnership with the local commercial fishing industry is intended to reduce the number of carp approaching the electric barrier system designed to stop the spread of Asian carp towards Lake Michigan. Halvorson's district includes much of the Illinois River where the Asian carp are prevalent.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will invest \$2 million to help an Illinois fishery company, Big River Fisheries, harvest carp from Illinois rivers. Big River will use the funds to retrofit their existing facility, which will create 61 new jobs and 120 indirect jobs.

Big River will then ship the harvest to a Chinese meat processing company, with which Illinois is entering into an agreement. The agreement runs through the end of 2011, and is expected to lead to the harvest at least 30 million pounds of fish, relieving the electric barrier of the number of carp approaching the Great Lakes.

"I've always called for a balanced solution to the Asian carp issue that protects Illinois jobs while protecting our environment. This is a great example of what we can do when we work together to come up with innovative approaches to stopping the spread of Asian carp. I applaud the State for putting this agreement together. We're creating new jobs, helping a local industry, and tackling the problem all at the same time," said Halvorson.

"We need to continue working on this issue, but innovative solutions like this will be an important part of our comprehensive approach to the invasive species issue," Halvorson said.

"This is an inexpensive approach to dealing with this issue, and it helps many men and women who are out of work."